ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A multi-point communications system joins a series of communications units in a series chain while providing communications between and among all of the units. Each communication unit comprises a pair of frames, preferably operating under E1/T1 protocols connected in a back-to-back

5 arrangement through the framers' local serial busses. Communication data is placed on and extracted from a designated set of channels on the serial busses while preamble data, controlling the passage and routing of the communications data, is placed on a separate set of bus channels. One of the interconnected communications units is designated as the "parent", and provides supervisory control over communications data, timing and flow. Designation of the parent unit may be performed on a

10 dynamic basis to allow the communications system to dynamically adapt to changes in system size as communications units are added or dropped.